

Senator is pursuing an agenda he believes is important for our country, he does not go desk to desk in the Chamber asking permission from anyone else to offer an amendment. That is not the way the Senate works, of course.

The minority leader believes very strongly, as does almost every single member of this caucus, and perhaps some others in the Senate, that we need to add a prescription drug benefit to the Medicare program. Life-saving miracle drugs can only perform miracles for those who can afford them. Senior citizens all too often are choosing between groceries and the prescription drugs they need. If we were to create the Medicare program today, unquestionably we would have a prescription drug benefit in that plan.

We have been very relentless in saying we believe we must add a prescription drug benefit to the Medicare program and we should do it in this Congress. We cannot and will not apologize for being relentless in that pursuit. We have had very few opportunities on the floor of this Senate to pursue our agenda. Yesterday was one of them.

If, at the end of the day, we get a bipartisan agreement to add a prescription drug benefit to the Medicare program, then we will be rewarded for our success by the senior citizens in this country who will be able to have access to the prescription drugs they need. If, at the end of the day, we do that, I guarantee that it will only be because, for the last couple of years, we have been relentless on the floor of the Senate and in the House, saying this Congress must do this.

We have had others who say, yes, we agree about the need for a prescription drug benefit, but we want to have the private insurance companies write a plan, and so on and so forth. The fact is that the private insurance companies have said publicly, and they have come to my office and said repeatedly, "We will not write a plan; we cannot write a plan." It is not within the range of financial possibilities for us to do what the majority party is proposing. In fact, one company official said, "We will write a plan that has \$1,000 in benefits, and we would have to charge \$1,200 in premiums for the plan to cover the administrative and other costs of the benefit." That is the same as having no plan, the same as doing nothing in terms of adding prescription drug coverage to Medicare.

Our goal is to find a way to solve this problem in this Congress. This Congress, with all due respect, on some of the big issues, has been a Congress of underachievers. We can do a lot better than this. We can add a prescription drug benefit to Medicare. We can pass a campaign finance reform bill. We can pass a Patients' Bill of Rights. We can pass an education bill that reduces class size and helps rebuild and renovate some of our nation's dilapidated schools. We can do these things if we put our minds to it. But somehow there is this notion by at least those who

control the agenda that what we need to do is tuck in our wings and get out of town and do as little as possible.

I don't want to belong to a Congress of underachievers. I want our Congress to do the things we ought to be doing together. Yes, a prescription drugs benefit in Medicare is one of those items. We cannot apologize for what we did yesterday. We must, at every opportunity, continue to push and coax and pull those in the Chamber who don't really want to do this to join us and fix what is wrong with respect to this Medicare program.

What is wrong, in part, is that it doesn't have coverage for prescription drugs, and there are a lot of senior citizens who are prescribed medications that will allow them to live longer and healthier lives, and they discover they can't afford them.

A woman in Dickinson, ND, who had breast cancer was told by her doctor that in order to reduce the chances of a recurrence of her breast cancer, she must take this prescription medicine. This woman, who was on Medicare and had a small fixed income, said, "Doctor, there isn't any way I can afford that medicine. There is no way. I am just going to have to take my chances." This situation faces too many senior citizens who need prescription medicine and find that they cannot afford it. That is why we must put a prescription drug benefit in the Medicare program.

Let's do something at the same time that puts some downward pressure on drug prices. Prices have risen too fast and too far on prescription drugs.

I just want to say that no one crossed any lines by not going to every desk in the Chamber about that motion yesterday. We are going to keep trying until we get enough votes in the Senate to add a prescription drug benefit in the Medicare plan. It is for a good reason. This country needs that sort of policy in place right now.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska is recognized.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I ask unanimous consent that I may speak as in morning business for a time not to exceed 20 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TWENTY YEARS OF CONGRESSIONAL SERVICE BY DAVID GARMAN

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I have come to the Senate floor today to offer my congratulations and thanks to my Chief of Staff, David Kline Garman, who has dedicated his entire life to public service. Today, in fact, marks the 20th anniversary of David's service in the United States Senate.

David's public service career began even before he came to the Senate. While attending Duke University in the 1970s, he participated in Naval ROTC and during the summer of 1976

he served with the naval amphibious task force which rescued American Nationals from Beirut during the Civil War in Lebanon.

After graduating with Honors from Duke in 1979, he served in the Peace Corps working on rural water supply projects in Nepal. He came to the Senate on June 23, 1980 to work as an intern with Senator Richard Dick" Stone (D-Florida), beginning in the Senator's mail room and working his way up to assist on defense, finance, banking and energy issues.

After David attended the Democratic Convention in 1980, he began to reconsider his political affiliation and on the day Ronald Reagan was inaugurated in 1981, David joined my staff to serve as Legislative Aide on defense and foreign relations. He was soon promoted to Legislative Assistant for energy and natural resources.

In addition to his legislative expertise, David is extremely knowledgeable in the nuts and bolts of high technology. In the late 1980s he became Founding Coordinator for the U.S. Senate Microcomputer Users Group. This group was instrumental in changing Senate technology policy so that each office could decide what type of computer system it would utilize. Previously, Senate offices could only use a system selected by the Senate Computer Center.

David's broad range of intellectual interests led me to select him to join the staff of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence when I was a Member of the Committee. He played a key role in the development of "environmental intelligence" capabilities in the intelligence community and at the national laboratories.

Some of David's best work occurred when he joined the staff of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. He was responsible for environmental issues, including the Clean Air Act, Global Climate Change Policy, energy R&D and Arctic Research, Science and Technology policy.

While David worked incredibly long hours on highly technical policy issues at the Energy Committee, he went to school at night and in 1997 earned a Master of Science in Environmental Sciences at Johns Hopkins University. That I consider a very noteworthy achievement.

Despite his many hours of work and study, David did find the time to meet a beautiful woman, Kira Finkler, and her lovely daughter Bonnie. Kira, who works on the Minority staff of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee did not allow energy policy differences to stand in the way of their relationship. They were married in December of 1998.

By this time, I had asked David to move from the Energy Committee and become my Chief of Staff. And as all Senators know, this is about the hardest job there is in a Senate office, because it is the Chief of Staff who has to get the trains to run on time. David does a superb job and I am deeply

grateful to him for how well he does his job.

I encourage his friends to join me in celebrating and recognizing this 20th anniversary.

As anyone can tell, David is a highly versatile and intelligent person who can handle almost any responsibility given to him. There are few people I know who are as capable as David. In addition to all of his substantive knowledge, David is a superb, outstanding speech writer, although he didn't write this speech. Some of the best speeches I have given were written by David.

Mr. President, there is a huge turnover of the staff on Capitol Hill. That reflects the long hours, modest pay and economically rewarding opportunities available in Washington's private sector. It is rare to find such an incredibly dedicated public policy servant as David Garman and I salute him today for 20 extraordinary years of service in the Senate and to the American people.

GAS PRICES AND GAS TAXES

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I rise to talk a little bit about a topic that is in the newspapers today and that has been all week; that is, the crisis concerning energy and our gasoline price structure currently prevalent throughout the country.

I think it is fair to go back and evaluate what has happened over the last 8 years in the Clinton/Gore administration.

I think it is obvious to all that the answer to our energy shortage by the Clinton administration is pretty much to put our economic destiny in the hands of the foreign oil price-fixing cartel because their answer to the shortage has been to increase oil imports and decrease domestic production.

The first time we saw this crisis coming was a few months ago. The reaction of the administration was to send the Secretary of Energy, Secretary Richardson, almost with a tin cup, to beg OPEC to increase their oil production. That was the answer.

The success of that effort is somewhat limited when you recognize that there is more pressure throughout the world to utilize oil. A consequence of that, of course, is the realization that the Asian economy is coming back, which is putting more pressure for oil in that part of the world. We found our reserves substantially lower as a consequence of the cold winter and an inadequate supply of heating oil. While we had this situation developing, it was quite evident what was going to happen behind the supply and demand curve. The demand was greater than the supply. We were pulling down our reserves faster than we were replacing them.

It is kind of interesting to see the "blame game" that is going on in Washington.

The administration is blaming the price increase on the oil companies,

and on the refiners—on anyone but themselves; on anyone other than recognizing that the Clinton/Gore administration has not really had an energy policy that has been identifiable.

The first graphic explanation is going back to a time a few years ago when the Vice President came to the Chamber and broke a tie vote to establish a 4.3 cent-per-gallon gas tax. That, I think, can certainly be reflected on as the "Gore gas tax."

Following that, we saw a series of activities by the administration that hardly would relieve the coming shortage that was evident, even at that time.

The administration has taken vast areas of the Rocky Mountain overthrust belt off limits to energy exploration. These are areas where there is a high potential for oil and gas discoveries—Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana. And other States were simply taken off limits. It is estimated that 64 percent of those areas have been removed.

There are areas in the Continental Shelf that they put off limits to energy exploration.

Furthermore, the Vice President, in a statement made in Louisiana, stated that if he were elected President, he would pursue a policy of no more leases if anyone even attempted to thwart existing leases that have been issued.

During that timeframe, the administration vetoed legislation to open up the small sliver of the Arctic Coastal Plain where reserves had been estimated as high as 16 billion barrels. That is just in my State of Alaska. It is estimated that if indeed the potential reserves were there, it would replace our current imports from Saudi Arabia over a period of 30 years.

Further, the administration has put domestic energy reserves off limits through a unilateral designation of new national monuments under the Antiquities Act.

It is a pretty simple equation. Domestic production is down 17 percent, and imports are up 14 percent.

We talk about rising gasoline prices in various areas of the country. We have talked about the refineries, and why they can't address this and continue with an uninterrupted supply at a relatively low price.

What the administration doesn't tell you is the reality—that the Environmental Protection Agency, through mandates, has caused a significant increase associated with the mandate for reformulated gasoline.

Who pays the price associated for this reformulated gasoline?

Why is it so high?

It is kind of interesting. When you go through the State of Illinois and the State of Wisconsin, you are made aware that as of June 1 there was a mandate by the Environmental Protection Agency that reformulated gasoline containing ethanol replacing MTBE be established. That costs roughly 50 cents more a gallon. You cannot use

the same gasoline in Springfield, IL, that you would use in Chicago, IL, because of the policies of the EPA.

I am not going to debate the merits of the regulation. But I will debate the reality that these regulations cost money because they require customizing, if you will, of the gasoline and the refining process.

It is kind of interesting to also note that we have lost 36 refineries in this country in the last decade. They haven't built a new refinery in almost 25 years. Why not? Obviously, it is not a very attractive business to get into, or the oil companies would be moving into it. They are moving out of them. The reason: It takes decades; in some cases not that long, but several years to get permits. The permitting process is legitimate. But if you can't basically get there from here, you are going to have very little interest in pursuing refineries.

I think it is fair to say that the administration's overzealous policies are responsible for closing some 36 regional refineries. The fact that no new ones have opened during the 8 years under the Clinton/Gore administration is a valid, understandable, legitimate reason as to why we are seeing gasoline prices in regional areas mandated by new policies from EPA prevail. The Vice President can try to shift the blame to the oil companies for higher prices, but let's not forget that he personally cast the tie-breaking vote in the Senate for higher gasoline prices.

To attempt to counteract that, we have a firm policy that is introduced in legislation which is the Republican energy production proposal for the year 2000. We recognize what has happened in this country. Today, the average price of gasoline is \$1.68 per gallon. In the Midwest, the average is \$1.87. The only way to address this responsibly is through a series of incentives that not only stimulate domestic production by opening up the overthrust belt, by opening up areas in the coastal OCS area, opening up areas in the arctic where we are likely to find significant discoveries, but have a goal in the legislation. The goal is to reduce dependence upon imports to less than 50 percent in a 10-year period of time. In the Vice President's book "Earth in the Balance," on page 73, he identifies "higher taxes on fossil fuels . . . is one of the logical first steps in changing our policy in a manner consistent with a more responsible approach to the environment"; that is, taxing higher fuels to discourage people from using fuels.

He further says it ought to be possible to establish a coordinated global program to accomplish the strategic goal of completely eliminating the internal combustion engine over, say, a 25-year period. The implications of that, of the Vice President encouraging high costs to address perhaps the elimination of the internal combustion engine, or his belief, if indeed it is his belief, that higher taxes on fossil fuel is